

BILL PASCRELL, JR.  
9th District, New Jersey

2409 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-5751  
(202) 225-5782 FAX

ROBERT A. ROE FEDERAL BUILDING  
200 FEDERAL PLAZA, SUITE 500  
PATERSON, NJ 07505  
(973) 523-5152  
(973) 523-0637 FAX  
<http://pascrell.house.gov>  
[bill.pascrell@mail.house.gov](mailto:bill.pascrell@mail.house.gov)



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
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DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND  
POLICY COMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

**The Honorable Bill Pascrell, Jr.**  
**Hearing Testimony**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure 2023 Member Day**  
**April 18, 2023**

Thank you very much to Chairman Sam Graves and Ranking Member Rick Larson for the opportunity to testify at the Committee's 2023 Member Day. I also want to recognize my Democratic New Jersey colleagues on the Committee, Representatives Donald Payne, Jr. and Rob Menendez.

As a former committee member, I know the essential role this committee plays in developing transportation policy for our nation. For this Member Day hearing, I want to focus on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization. I am seeking relief for those northern New Jersey constituents who are having their lives disrupted by pervasive noise that is reportedly coming from helicopters flying close to our neighborhoods at various hours of the day and night.

I appreciate that several factors are related to the source of helicopter noise, but it is having an adverse impact on North Jerseyans' quality of life. Residents of New Jersey's Ninth Congressional District have regularly informed my office that helicopter flights have increased in frequency. There have been complaints to both my office and local media reports about helicopter activity that has disturbed sleeping patterns and caused homes to shake. Studies detailing the negative impacts of aircraft noise, including from helicopters,<sup>1</sup> have found it causes disturbances that can increase community annoyance, disrupt sleep, adversely affect academic performance of children, and even increase the risk for cardiovascular disease.

There are several flight operators in the tri-state area and North Jersey region, including private businesses involved in transit or tours, as well as public operations that involve military, law enforcement, or air medical evacuation missions. The public safety records of these operators are checkered. Indeed, a helicopter operated by a private company crashed soon after takeoff at Essex County Airport, causing serious injuries to the pilot.<sup>2</sup> Initial reports from the National Transportation Safety Board indicated that the aircraft may have had faulty repairs before takeoff.

I hope there are actions we can include in the FAA reauthorization to address my constituents' growing aggravation at residential helicopter noise. Specifically, I am encouraging the Committee to include language that would implement recommendations from the U.S. Government

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5437751>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/essex/2022/06/04/helicopter-crash-essex-county-nj-airport/7513845001/>

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Accountability Office (U.S. GAO) that requires the FAA to develop a mechanism to improve the sharing of information regarding noise complaints. While recent U.S. GAO recommendations have focused on Washington, D.C.,<sup>3</sup> the entire nation would benefit from such a tool. This mechanism should require helicopter operators to share helicopter noise complaints they receive with the FAA and have the FAA direct complaints to the appropriate helicopter operator.

Additionally, I recommend the Committee include language that would implement a GAO recommendation to improve FAA officials' ability to identify the helicopter operators, which is an issue because of the opaque ownership structures (such as limited liability corporations) used by owners to register their aircraft using historical data.<sup>4</sup> The use of such ownership structures limits FAA's oversight of these aircrafts, and with it public transparency.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to my request. I look forward to introducing legislation with these goals in mind soon. I hope we can work together to resolve helicopter noise issues facing my neighbors.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Pascrell Jr." in a cursive style.

Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-200.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-20-164>